

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN PFOR OVIP

SUBJ: LOCAL ATMOSPHERE FOR SECRETARY'S VISIT

REF: PANAMA 0639

SUMMARY: HIGH GOP OFFICIALS MET WITH NEWSMEN FEBRUARY 1 TO EXPLAIN PURPOSE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE IT WAS TO BE A HISTORICAL VISIT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE REPRESENTING A "SINCERE AND HONEST EFFORT" BY THE TWO COUNTRIES TO GET THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS GOING, ITS PURPOSE WAS NOT TO SIGN A NEW CANAL TREATY. NEWSMEN WERE TOLD THAT KISSINGER WOULD BE AN HONORED GUEST OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT, AND HIS VISIT WAS IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP. IN A REFERENCE TO THE GOP'S ADVERSARIES, THE OFFICIALS SAID NO MANIFESTATION OF HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SECRETARY WOULD BE TOLERATED. GOP LEADERS FROM TORRIJOS DOWNWARD WILL DO THEIR UTMOST TO IMPRESS THE SECRETARY WITH PANAMANIAN HOSPITALITY AND ENSURE HIM A PLEASANT VISIT. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE

CALLED NEWSMEN TOGETHER FEBRUARY 1 TO DISCUSS SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT. THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO ELIMINATE POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE VISIT AND TO LAY DOWN GROUND RULES FOR MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE VISIT.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER TACK'S STATEMENT (FULL TEXT OF WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED BY FBIS 011957Z FEB 74) FOLLOW. HE SAID NEWSMAN SHOULD HAVE A VERY PRECISE IDEA OF THE FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT: "IT IS TO ENABLE US TO REACH A FINAL SOLUTION AND SIGN, WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF PANAMA, A DOCUMENT WHICH CONTAINS A SERIES OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES WITH REGARD TO THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW TREATY" WHICH HAD BEEN REACHED DURING TALKS HELD WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER IN NOVEMBER AND JANUARY. HE STRESSED THAT "IT IS NOT A MATTER OF SIGNING AN AGREEMENT OR A TREATY. WE WANT YOU TO KEEP THIS IN MIND, BECAUSE WE HAVE SEEN IN SOME PUBLICATIONS REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SIGNING OR OBTAINING A TREATY OR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AT THIS TIME. I REPEAT, THIS IS NOT THE CASE...THIS IS A BASIC AGREEMENT WHICH WILL LATER SERVE AS A GUIDE TO ORIENT THE NEGOTIATIONS... IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TREATY ITSELF. THIS IS A STAGE WHICH WILL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW THE SIGNING OF THE DOCUMENT CONTAINING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES."

3. TACK ALSO SAID THE AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES REPRESENTS A "SINCERE AND HONEST EFFORT" BY BOTH COUNTRIES TO GET THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS GOING. UNTIL A YEAR AGO, HE SAID, NEGOTIATIONS HAD CENTERED ON THE WHOLE RANGE OF DETAILS INVOLVED IN A NEW CANAL TREATY AND HAD REACHED A POINT WHERE NEITHER SIDE WOULD BUDGE FROM ITS POSITION. LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES HAD DECIDED THAT A POLITICAL DECISION HAD TO BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO GET THE NEGOTIATIONS MOVING. THE AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES WAS THE RESULT. IT REPRESENTS A CHANGE IN THE METHOD OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. INSTEAD OF CONTINUING WITH A DISCUSSION OF DETAILS THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE NOW GETTING TOGETHER ON THE FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS AND THEN WILL ENTER INTO DETAILED DEVELOPMENT OF THOSE MATTERS.

4. TACK ALSO SAID THE SECRETARY'S VISIT WOULD BE OF GREAT HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR PANAMA AND THAT KISSINGER, DIS-

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PLAYING HIS CHARACTERISTIC SENSE OF HISTORY, RIGHTLY DECIDED THAT THE PROPER PLACE FOR SIGNING THE AGREEMENT IS IN PANAMA.

5. MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE JUAN MATERNO VASQUEZ TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO KISSINGER'S VISIT IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND WOULD NOT STAND FOR ANY FORM OF HOSTILITY, ARTIFICIAL OR OTHERWISE. WITH REFERENCE TO THE GOP'S RIGHT-WING OPPONENTS, HE SAID THE

GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE THAT IT HAD ADVERSARIES AND THAT WHILE THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWPOINTS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE ANY DEVIATION OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES.

6. EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 2 IN POPULAR TABLOID CRITICA PICKED UP HIGHLY POSITIVE THEME OF "HISTORICAL VISIT" ENUNCIATED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER, COMPLEMENTING TACK FOR EXPLAINING EVERYTHING, NEVER HIDING THE TRUTH FROM THE PEOPLE. IT CASTIGATED THE OPPOSITION FOR SEEKING TO DERAIL THE NEGOTIATIONS AND HEARTILY WELCOMED THE SECRETARY WHO WAS BRINGING HIS GREAT ABILITY, PRESTIGE, AND GOOD WILL TO PANAMA. HE WOULD BE AN HONORED GUEST OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE.

7. COMMENT: THE SECRETARY'S VISIT, CONCERNING THE ONE GREAT NATIONAL ISSUE THAT PANAMA HAS, IS FOR ALL PANAMANIAN AN EVENT OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. GOP LEADERS WILL DO THEIR UTMOST TO IMPRESS THE SECRETARY WITH PANAMANIAN HOSPITALITY AND TO MAKE HIS VISIT A PLEASANT ONE. THE MEETING THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE HELD WITH NEWSMEN YESTERDAY WAS PART OF THAT EFFORT.
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